

# Parks and Recreation Activity

## 2004 Year End Report

The Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries Department remained very active in 2004. We offered more programs and special events and served more people than at any other time in the history of the department. Our residents had the opportunity to participate in quality recreation activities throughout the entire year at low cost and in many instances at no cost. We will strive to continue this trend in 2005 and to do our part in making "Delta Township - A Great Place to Live, Work, and Play." Highlights of 2004, divided into categories of Administration, Recreation, Parks, and Outside Activities appear below.

### Administration

The Commission and administrative staff work on many of the activities that are reported elsewhere in this document and in some of the ones listed in the year-end reports for the Cemetery, Recycling, and Hall and Grounds activities. In addition, the following tasks warrant special mention even though they may not add to the facilities and programs offered but are an important part of our operation. Each year the Commission and staff put together a Capital Improvements Program where projects planned for the next five years are explained and prioritized. The CIP is then sent to the Planning Commission for their review and prioritizing compared to all other Township projects. A total of 13 projects were included in the Commission's submittal. The staff and Commission are also responsible for preparation of the budget requests for four separate activities within the Township's operation. The Commission reviews all the requests included within these budgets and submits a recommendation to the Manager for the adoption of the budgets. Year-end reports for the four activities the department is responsible for are prepared that list the accomplishments of the year and the goals for the next year. The preparation of all of these reports and documents require a significant amount of time; however, they are very valuable as they help guide us through our operation and map out our paths for the future.



This year's fireworks show was again one of the biggest efforts of the Commission. In the 36-year history of the fireworks in Delta Township, there has never been a finer display of fireworks and the quality of the show just continues to get better. Delta Township's pledge of support for the event is set to a maximum contribution of \$10,000. The Commission decided to target a show worth \$25,000 meaning that they would generate \$15,000 in donations from area merchants. The Commission obtained donations totaling \$17,040 in spite of losing a major sponsor and two minor sponsors. This effort meant that the Township's contribution was only \$7,960. The show was well worth the expenditure as numerous comments were received as to how fantastic the display was.



The Commission recognizes the sponsors by having a VIP area that gives them an up-close view of the display and one representative of our sponsors was given the opportunity to light the opening barrage of the display. The Commission also raised the funds for the VIP area expenses. A total of 737 representatives from the sponsors attended the VIP area.

The Delta Rocks! Family Festival, which began as a series of concerts in 1999, continues to expand and grow each year. This event is now the largest single activity the department is involved with. The festival's goal is to provide a fun event with activities that will appeal to all members of the family. This is being accomplished by providing a wide array of activities which include clowns, pony rides, the Super Sling Shot, inflatable attractions, live animals, classic car show, demonstrations, make-it-take-it craft booths, live music, magicians, and dance performances. The staff from this department organized the vast majority of these activities as well as set up Sharp Park as the site for the event. Our department was also responsible for staffing the festival with volunteers, making arrangements with concessionaires working during the event, and all publicity related to Delta Rocks! Three staff members were heavily involved in the project and most other staff members were involved in both planning and the actual "day of" activities. It is estimated that over 1100 staff-hours were spent on the project.



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The Delta Rocks! Family Festival was a huge success and its future looks even better. It is estimated that over 15,000 people attended the daylong event. The extremely popular attraction, the Delta Business Expo, brought in several businesses under a large tent to show visitors what the business was about. The festival ended with a performance from a father/son team of magicians. A large number of people filtered into the amphitheater from the festival for the last show, which was very well received. The staff will continue to evaluate the various events and make adjustments to the day to keep it a top-quality family activity.

The Commission and staff also continued their efforts of working with the Township Board to acquire land for park purposes especially in the area of the township west of the I96 expressway. With all the development taking place in this area the importance of obtaining land for this purpose has intensified. In 2002 work began in cooperation with Waverly Community Schools to take over the administration of the senior citizen program (Waverly 39ers Club) and the community aquatics program that Waverly has been offering. Also, included in these talks was exploring the school district's willingness to open the school facilities to our use. The agreement was finalized in early 2003. We now have operated

both of these programs for a full budget cycle and they are showing increased participation and stable expenses. We are also able to utilize the school facilities for various other programs. It will take some time to realize the true benefit of the school district's

facility use as we need time to become more aware of what the schools have available and to tailor our program offerings accordingly. This is a huge step in providing additional space for indoor recreation programming.

Staff also continues to be involved in the production of the Township's magazine, a publication that is delivered to all residents on a quarterly basis. This magazine explains many services the Township offers and includes all recreation programs and events offered to our residents.





Staff is responsible for the enforcement of the Noxious Weed Ordinance. A total of 144 lots were inspected for possible violation of the ordinance, 126 lots were cited for violation, and the Parks maintenance staff mowed 27 lots that were not maintained by the owner of the lot after being cited for the violation. The number of lots inspected is a 68% increase from last year and lots maintained by the Township is 63% higher than the 2003 numbers.

The staff is also responsible for the Parks and Recreation Web site. Nearly all of the departmental activities are posted on the site. We are able to post results of the adult softball leagues on a daily basis during the season. This is not only a popular service for our players but also saves a great deal of time in the office by not having to answer most of the inquiries related to this or send out



large mailings. During the bulk of the summer softball season (May through September), the number of visitors to the schedules and standings page is tremendous. We are also posting the “cancellation of games due to weather” status as a marquee on the softball page and teams can check for game schedules and locations as well as obtain information on games that have been rescheduled. Photos are taken of the league champions when possible and these photos as well as the team’s

roster are posted on the site. Tournament brackets are placed on the Web site giving all game information to the observer. In addition to the Web site, we have developed a system of e-mail notification of events based on the user’s interest. People can select specific events or ask that all event information be sent to them via e-mail. This service is very popular and it also saves staff time answering questions relating to various events.

Several upgrades to the site are ongoing:

- We update the photos and offer information on all of our parks including some park history, park rules, and information on picnic pack rentals.
- We update the photos and expand the information on the Community Center to include general information such as room sizes, excerpts of the rules for rental, and rules for alcoholic beverages.
- A class locations page is updated and includes directions and photos.
- Parents can print a youth athletic registration form and mail it in.
- We have all of our important dates listed on the new Township-wide calendar that is linked to the corresponding event.
- We add information on our senior citizen and aquatic programs including regularly updated schedules.
- The cemetery rules and regulations, rates, maps, and photos are available.

- The Weed Ordinance is listed.
- Information on the Annual Fireworks Display is available.
- The Delta Rocks! Family Festival Web site has been redesigned to include an expanded listing of the fun activities planned, thanks to the sponsors, photos, information on how to get involved, and more. We will continue to work on the site to improve it, as it is a great promotional tool for the event.
- Parks and Recreation department history and Commission are listed.

One service that we have had numerous requests for is allowing our customers to pay by credit card. In late 2004 we started getting the accounts set up to enable taking the cards. It appears that in early 2005 we will have this service available. Currently the senior and aquatic programs take credit cards, however, we are “piggybacking” on the account that Waverly used for these activities before we took over those programs. Once we get our own account we will no longer need to have the help from Waverly. Once we have the credit card account we will then begin working on online registration and payments for certain activities. This will be accomplished through the Web site at a minimal expense to the Township but a major convenience to our customers.

## **Recreation**

The recreation area of the department offers quality programs on a year round basis for all ages. Our residents continue to participate in record numbers and we continuously look for new and better programs to offer. With the ability to offer programs at the Waverly School facilities we are able to add more indoor programs to those we already offer. Programs are currently being offered at other non Township-owned sites such as: Master Flotka’s Black Belt Academy, Shinn’s Taekwondo Academy, Woldumar Nature Center, The Summit ice arena, and Sheraton Lansing Hotel; however, time available at these sites is limited and in some cases cost-prohibitive.

Attendance of our 2004 community education classes was 1210 individuals. We add new adult and youth classes every term during the year and will strive to continue with this goal. Many classes fill almost immediately once registration opens. We try to open up additional sections where we can, however sometimes this is not possible due to lack of room availability or the instructor not being able to schedule in additional time slots.



Twenty special events were offered in 2004 in addition to the two major events, the Fireworks and Delta Rocks! Family Festival. Our special events have become so popular that we have parents calling months in advance to find out the dates of certain events.

Several of our events including the Breakfast and Lunch with Santa Claus and the Daddy/Daughter and Mother/Son Dances have become multi-generational affairs for many families. We are pleased to be able to provide quality events that attract three generations of a family.

During 2004 the Music in the Park series was expanded to four concerts. Attendance for these events is increasing steadily as we continue to bring in quality entertainers and more people are finding out that we offer them. Touch-a-Truck Day continues to be very popular. Staff works very hard on getting new equipment in to the event so that participants from previous years see something new each visit. The Walk Michigan! program and the Pacers Walking Club joined together to offer several walks in addition to those walks offered separately. This combination goes a long way in promoting the overall goal of both groups – physical fitness. Pre-School Olympics again offered new games and events, along with the ever-popular marshmallow shot put, discus throw, and “miniature” miniature golf. This is another event that brings out the entire family. Breakfast and Lunch with Santa Claus offered a new child-friendly menu that proved to be very popular with the participants. The Pumpkin Painting and Carving Party added guessing games, raffles, and coloring activities that were extremely popular.

Small changes are made every year to all of the events to keep them fresh and interesting for our participants. We do not anticipate any major changes in 2005. The walking programs Walk Michigan! and the Pacers Walking Club will continue to be concentrated on so that we may encourage our residents to exercise more by offering an easy way to walk to better health.

Our youth athletic programs continue to draw well and operate at or near capacity. Our main issue continues to be finding places to play our outdoor sports. At this time over 90% of these programs are held on non-township owned property. This

causes problems in regards to maintenance, scheduling of practices and games and limiting participation.



The 2004 Adult Softball Program saw two major changes take place. A rule change adopted by the Amateur Softball Association for 2004 was used in Delta Township. Stealing is now allowed in Men's Slow Pitch. We offered this rule to our Women's teams but based on team input, decided not to adopt it. We also incorporated into

the summer adult softball program our One Ball - One Strike Rule that has previously only used in the fall softball program. These two changes gave us the exact effect we were looking for. Simply put, we played more softball. The



number of complete games played increased dramatically. Playing more games to completion lowered the number of games that are decided using the one hour and ten minute time limit. Games that end using the time limit are a necessity but are many times controversial. Delta Township continues to be a leader and innovator in the area of adult softball.

Our newest large programs, the 39ers Senior Citizen Program and the Aquatics Program are becoming more popular. Highlights of these activities are as follows:

### **39ers**

Numbers continue to be improving steadily for the daily activities such as Tri-County Office on Aging Lunch Program on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.



Card games are offered on Monday and Thursday evenings and Tuesday afternoons. More travel opportunities were offered in 2004. We traveled to Alaska, the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island, a Tiger Baseball Game, and Meijer Gardens in Grand Rapids to mention a few. Additional exercise opportunities have been added with Exercise for Health and Tai Chi classes now being offered. A new Senior Coordinator has been hired to replace

Mary Winegar who has taken a position with the Michigan Recreation and Park Association. Rose Stevens was hired and began working in mid-December.

### **Aquatics**

2004 gave us a better indication of what the Aquatic Program can be with no major construction issues to deal with unlike year one. Numbers have increased in both our aquatic exercise program and instructional swim program. Our pool is the warmest pool in the area operating at 86 degrees. We offer one of the largest Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Exercises Programs in the Lansing area. The only area of concern has been the ability to find staff for these programs. Finding lifeguards has been a struggle at times. We are fortunate that our Aquatic Coordinator Jennifer McKervey is a certified Lifeguard and Water Safety Instructor. This has allowed us the ability to offer classes to train future staff. We offered Lifeguarding and CPR classes in 2004 and will be offering them again in 2005.



## **Program Participation**

Below is a listing of the various programs and special events offered in 2004 and their participation levels. Class participant numbers do not include several classes we do not take registrations for, which come to an estimated total of 280 registrations for the year.

### **Programs**

- Adult Summer Softball – 103 teams – 1518 players
- Adult Fall Softball – 47 teams – 604 players
- Spring Youth Soccer – 700 players
- Fall Youth Soccer – 527 players
- Youth Boys Baseball – 151 players
- Youth Girls Softball – 102 players
- Youth Coed Basketball – 249 participants
- Tri-County Basketball League – 7 teams – 70 players
- Youth Coed T-Ball – 183 participants
- Youth and Adult Golf Lessons – 58 participants
- Winter Enrichment Classes – 80 classes offered – 349 participants
- Spring Enrichment Classes – 61 classes offered – 176 participants
- Summer Enrichment Classes – 52 classes offered – 153 participants
- Fall Enrichment Classes – 65 classes offered – 282 participants
- Youth Tennis Lessons – 46 participants
- Pacers Walking Club – over 300 active walkers

### **Special Events**

- Delta Rocks! Family Festival – 15,000 participants
- Easter Fun Carnival – 303 participants
- Fishing Derby – 400 kids and family members
- Pumpkin Carving and Painting Party – 168 participants
- Daddy/Daughter Dance – 274 participants
- Mother/Son Dance – 164 participants
- Community Garage Sale – 60 tables – 655 shoppers
- Delta Arts Fall Craft Show – 62 crafters – 1304 shoppers
- Nursery School Olympics – 266 participants
- Breakfast with Santa – 151 participants
- Lunch with Santa – 122 participants
- Santa's Hotline – 89 calls made
- Touch-A-Truck Day – 37 trucks – 2000 "touchers"
- Music in the Park – 255 spectators plus thousands for the July 3rd fireworks
- July 3 Fireworks at Sharp Park – "Excitement in the Air" – approximately 25,000 spectators
- Friday Family Frolics – 124 participants
- Walk Michigan – 341 walkers



## Parks

The Parks operation is extremely busy throughout the year. To list all of the individual projects that have taken place would be exhaustive. All of the various activities that go on in the parks including organized programs as well as general use by the public require several tasks that the Parks staff needs to perform in order for the activity to take place.

The first part of the year is always spent repairing many pieces of equipment as well as performing routine maintenance to get the parks ready for the summer season. We experienced unusually wet weather in the early part of the season that put heavy pressure on the staff in getting facilities open for use. This was followed by a period of very nice weather that brought on very high use of the facilities and not much time to get them ready. The staff did an admirable job getting this done, as there were only a few spots that needed attention before the public could use them.



The Parks staff maintains over 320 acres of developed park land, six other Township-owned sites, and four school sites where soccer or softball fields are located. A total of over 200 acres of mowing is included in their grounds maintenance responsibilities. The number of hours of mowing time totaled over 1800 hours. This heavy load of mowing did not stop us from getting the parks into great shape, probably even better than they have been in the past several years. Probably one of the biggest reasons this was possible was that no very large projects were scheduled for the year. This allowed for staff to be assigned to many smaller projects that go a long way in making the parks look great. We did construct an addition to the pole barn at Sharp Park. We added a total of 640 square feet onto

the building so we can store all of the materials and equipment that has accumulated for use at our special events.



Another project that was completed using partly contracted and partly Delta staff was the construction of a new restroom facility at Grand Woods Park. The existing restroom was constructed in the 1960's and was not handicap accessible. The new facility meets this need and also provides a second restroom for use, a very needed addition because of the high use at the park.

Grand Woods Park was also the site for installation of new trail signs. We received a grant from the Rails-to-Trails organization for \$3,000. With these funds we designed and installed two large directional signs mapping out the layout of



the park and 12 smaller signs placed at various locations for park users to refer to for their location within the park. We also replaced a swing set at Leland Park. The one that was there was causing maintenance problems and the decision was made to replace it rather than continue to repair it. At Sharp Park additional parking lot lighting was installed in the east lot. Previously this lot was lighted by the lights west of the lot, however, the trees between the lot and the lights have grown to the point of blocking out the light. The new lighting solves this problem.

Again this year, additional labor has been provided through the use of an inmate work program in cooperation with the Eaton County Sheriff's Department. This is a valuable source that we utilize on a regular basis.

General routine maintenance of the grounds and facilities has been and always will be a top priority with the staff. Providing the best quality park experience for our users is the ultimate goal.

## Outside Activities

On a year round basis, the staff of the Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries Department is involved in tasks that are not only a benefit to the department, but also benefit other Township functions as well. We are happy to be able to assist the Township by performing these tasks, as they are indeed necessary and help make the Township what it is. Consult the Cemetery Activity and Hall and Grounds Activity reports for details on many of these projects as staff has worked on many of them.

*Twelve small trail maps like this one are distributed throughout the trails, in addition to two large signs (above) located in the front area of the park.*



## The Outlook for 2005 and Beyond

The Parks and Recreation Department is at an exciting and challenging point. We have made many decisions that should determine where we are headed. These decisions involve land acquisition and indoor recreation facilities.

We need to totally revise the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan for the entire township as well as individual Master Plans for all of our undeveloped park sites. The Township's development of the "Delta Trails Non-Motorized Transportation Study" should be completed in 2005. The Department and Commission will be heavily involved with implementation of this plan. The contin-



ued expansion of the opportunities available through the agreement with Waverly Community Schools will be very important. The upcoming year will be very exciting in this area as we gain more knowledge of the current programs and begin to develop new activities in the senior citizen and aquatic areas. Also, our access to all of the Waverly facilities will enable us to offer many new programs that we could not offer before due to lack of an appropriate facility. We also will continue to review our cur-

rent events as this constant review and change helps keep our events fresh, which keeps participants enthusiastic about the various programs.

Probably our most important goal in the area of administration will be to implement the use of credit cards for the collection of fees for programs and services within our operation. We feel that this will increase our program enrollment and make it easier for participants to sign up, as it will enable us to eventually use the internet for program registration.

The maintenance staff will also be busy. We will be working on the construction of the trails at Grand Woods Park and at Hawk Meadow Park. The Township has increased its desire to provide more trails for our residents. Much of this desire is due to the tremendous success of the Hunter's Orchard Park trail. No other major projects are planned for the parks crew as these two will take up their available non-maintenance time.

Overall our goal is to offer the greatest number of programs and events for the residents of Delta Township with the highest quality, for the least cost, so that we can make  
***"Delta Township - An Even Greater Place to Live, Work, and Play."***